2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

woman has finished dishing up, she very often wipes out the pot with her fingers before setting it aside, for utensils are washed just before they are needed—not after use. To prepare the relish a little water is placed in a wide-mouthed cooking dish, the pumpkin leaves and flowers are added and then put on the fire. Within a few minutes the spinach is sufficiently cooked. A handful of salt is put in, the ground monkey nuts are added, the mixture stirred once or twice, when it is ready to be dished up into small black earthen basins.

Serving food to guests is a ceremonious affair. The sleeping or reception hut is carefully swept out; the food is placed in it, often before the dust has properly settled, a mat is unrolled and the guests are called to eat. To your surprise, you discover that the host does not dine with honoured guests. A wooden dish of food has been placed in a double basket with a lid. Beside it stands the relish. Mukhadi approaches on her knees with a white enamel basin of water for the guests to wash their hands, then crawls away again, leaving the water to be used again after the meal. Before beginning to eat, the youngest of the visitors claps his hands saying, '*Ndau*.' The rest reply, '*Morɛna*,' and the meal is begun. Each one, using his fingers, breaks a piece of a mealie meal cake, dips it in the dish of relish and eats it. There is no salt in the porridge, to make up for which the relish is very salt indeed. All eat from one bowl but there is nothing unhygienic in this. When finished you again wash your hands. Light beer, if there is any, may round off the meal.

There is no communal meal and no proper mealtime. Each wife places food for the husband in the reception hut of his chief wife and here he comes to eat any time he wishes. Later the remains will be fetched back to the hut whence it came. Food is not sent from one hut to another, except when special luxury dishes are made, known in general as *madzaga* and usually prepared outside of cooking hours. These are always shared. The younger children sit down to eat with the mother in the courtyard, but the herdboys, in a hurry to take out the cattle, seize several cakes, place some relish on them, and walk off. Metiane, aged four, does not want vegetable relish. He has seen meat prepared in the courtyard of his friend Nagambi and so he refuses spinach. When his mother tries to coax him, he merely sets up a dismal howl; but he is neither severely scolded nor beaten as a European child in such a situation might be. Instead they try to pacify him, till at last the mother of Nagambi, seeing the fuss, brings him a small piece of meat, telling him to be quiet.

The cooking done, a general migration takes place, and the village, a hive of industry in the morning, becomes almost if not quite deserted. During the agricultural season one seldom finds people at home in the afternoons. They are all out in the fields. One woman, securing the reed door of her kitchen by means of a wooden stamper balanced against it on the outside, takes a hoe and is off to mound her *njugo* beans. Another is still busy with her weeding. A third, taking a calabash of food with her, goes to join her daughter, who left shortly after sunrise, to make *morula* cider under the trees in their field. It is a process involving considerable labour. Mamadomi is not going to the fields to-day. She wants to smear a fresh coating of dung over her courtyard and to go on with a basket she

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

it down and cry, but, beyond a few sympathetic words from his friends and the injunction to be quiet, nothing is done which may enhance his sense of his own importance. In competition with the growing interests of the toddler, who is able also to partake of the ordinary food of adults, suckling becomes of less and less importance, indulged in only at night or when he feels in need of being fondled. His companions, too, many of them a little older than himself, begin to tell him there are worms in his mother's breast and perhaps even tease him a little. If there is no younger brother or sister, a child may continue drinking at his mother's breast until about four or five years of age and it is not at all an unusual sight to see a boy of five stealing a drink at his mother's breast before running off in the morning to herd goats with the others. Most children leave off drinking quite naturally; sometimes, however, the mother puts some chili on her breast or a bitter herb to deter the child. It is said that boys generally like to drink from the breast much longer than do girls, and certainly it was little boys from three to seven years of age, not little girls, who used to nestle up to and stealthily fondle one of us.

There is no necessary connexion between weaning and the resumption of sexual intercourse by the parents, which may take place at any time after teething and depends largely upon the number of wives there are. It is, however, believed that normal sex relations should not be resumed till after weaning. If they are resumed before the child is able to walk, the old women who control such relations between husband and wife will warn the parents to be careful: 'For who will carry both children?' Sex intercourse on the part of its mother is believed to harm the suckling child. That is why, when husband and wife resume such relations, some of the semen of the husband must be smeared all over the child 'that it may know its father' and not take ill. Often the semen is mixed with powdered medicine as well as with the vaginal secretions of its mother. A suckling woman is seldom accused of adultery; it is thought that she would not wilfully do a thing that is harmful to her child. Christians resume intercourse after the child is a few months old; such external intercourse is said by them to 'make the child grow'. The sending of children to the mother's mother for a few years is likewise not definitely associated with the weaning, though naturally it cannot take place before.

Grown-ups try to teach children to greet (*lɔsha*) at an early age or they clap their hands to make the toddlers dance, however unsteadily. When a child is able to go on an errand to the next courtyard, this is considered a great advance. It is then said, 'The child is able to hear.' Bodily control is not expected of small children; but by the time a child is about three years old its mother will take it outside the village near the ash heap and smack it if it messes in the hut or courtyard. At five or six a child will go out into the bush.

There are few restrictions in the life of a small child: no elders run after him with injunctions not to touch this or that; if he chooses to roll in the ash heap, he may do so without getting into any greater trouble than a mild rebuke from his mother, who will tell him she objects to suckling so dirty a boy. One may see a child playing with a sharp knife without a word of admonition from his parents. There are no regular hours. A

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

●861 child will sleep when it feels sleepy or run about when it is not. Up to the age of about six it will be called to bed by its mother at night, but older children go to bed when they feel inclined, often long after their parents have retired. The only form of washing that may be insisted upon is that of the child's face before eating. In comparison with the life of a European child, constantly under the vigilant eye of a grown-up parent or nurse, surrounded by dangerous or valuable objects which he must not touch, dressed in clothes which he is expected to keep clean, and forced to keep regular hours, Bantu childhood is a wonderfully care-free existence with plenty of good companionship. Constant comradeship with those of his own age tends to make a Lovedu child shy in the presence of grown-ups, especially after the age of about six. But independence of its parents and of adults in general is developed to a marked degree. Small boys of seven will disappear from home to go and visit some relative miles away. Their parents will be unperturbed, though, if they do not return within a few days, they will set out to look for them. Boys of ten or eleven may run away to work with European farmers (though this is infrequent) and prove themselves well able to withstand the unsympathetic treatment they sometimes receive.

The attitude of parents to children is one of indulgence, but there is little spoiling, because parents are busy and a child spends most of his time with those of his own age-group. Punishment of children is infrequent, though threats are common. A child who is disobedient to his father 'will be eaten by the vultures'; and a situation which one sees enacted over and over again is an adult, stick in hand and with many imprecations, chasing away a group of toddlers and young children from the courtyard where a case is being held. The children, screaming and laughing, run away, only to return again within ten minutes, when the same performance has to be repeated. Beatings are relatively infrequent and children are never dealt with by stinting them as regards food or clothes. Small children may be smacked if they steal monkey nuts from their mother's stores; we have seen a child of four beaten on the legs with its mother's string necklace because it was crying for a second mealie when it had already been given one, and herdboys are beaten if they let the cattle stray into the gardens. On the whole, however, beatings are seldom administered, praising of children for their good actions being far more common. Discipline in a Lovedu child's life comes, not from parents, but from children older than himself. When a child gets into tantrums the attitude of adults and older children is one of forbearance; disciplinary action is never thought necessary. Madarabani, in a fit of temper because his sister had upset his tin of grasshopper stew, ran amok, hitting out at his elder brother and treading in the mealie meal put out to dry in the courtyard. Instead of punishing him, as he might have been in a European household, those around him merely tried to calm him: his elder brother humoured him and tried to distract his attention by showing him a double-bladed knife, while his sister tried to make amends by offering him a sweet potato. His mother, busy with her cooking, took no notice.

The personality of a child, his likes and dislikes, are respected by adults,

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

as are also any rights of ownership he may have. A child, who has been given a piece of land of his own to cultivate, will dispose of its produce as he pleases, and he may sell it for clothes or allow it to be used by the household. If he has been given fowls and the father wishes to kill one, he will mention it to the child and promise him another. Among parents one does not find the competitive jealousies that are apt to arise between European mothers about the relative size, weight, or health of their children, and there is little or no comparison of babies or boasting of their ability or cleverness. But a very precocious child is not liked; people may suspect that he is being taught to be a witch; and 'he outwits you obliquely [by way of witchcraft]'. Frightening of children by adults is of common occurrence. Not only are children told when naughty that a Shangana-Tonga or European will come and catch them or that a big elephant stalks about the village at night killing small children who will not go to bed, but mothers take pleasure in frightening them even when they are not naughty. Often a mother would try to force her child to come near us when she saw it was afraid or would tell it that we were about to carry it away in our suitcase. When it ran away crying, she would laugh with great merriment. If a small child refuses to greet a relative in the correct manner, his mother might take a knife and threaten to cut him or take hold of a pot and threaten to cook him unless he obeys. But fear of bogies is not excessive and fear is certainly not the only or most effective means of control.

Children learn the tasks required of adults simply by doing them. They are anxious to imitate their elders, and there is never any compulsory element in the teaching of these skills. Moreover, in their education they have this advantage, that it is not carried on in an institution divorced from everyday adult activities. 'The child feels that he is an essential part of society; all he does is a direct contribution to the domestic economy. If a small girl of five accompanies her mother to the fountain and returns solemnly carrying a diminutive calabash of water on her head, she feels she is doing important work, for her contribution will be used with that of her mother. 'The stick even of a child helps the adult across' and, in fact, a girl of six is able to fill quite a large pot of water for a busy mother by going to and fro with small quantities at a time from the fountain. One night, while sitting in a hut, we watched a girl of seven learning to cook. Fermented porridge was needed for the baby and this the girl set out to make in a small pot in the presence of her mother and several other girls somewhat older than herself who happened to be there. When the water boiled, she put in some ground grain, twirling the porridge twirler between the palms as she had seen her mother do. She took the comments and criticisms of the company with good grace, even when they smiled at her awkwardness. Meanwhile, her mother mentioned to us how useful it would be to have some one who could cook the evening meal on days when she came home late or tired from fetching wood. To a helpful toddler, its mother might say, 'Thank you, my lady' (*Ahee Khoba ya ga*), praising her by implying that she has already reached the maturity and usefulness of a mature young woman; or she may quote the maxim, 'Bearing children is not the same as gathering